1: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1938 AV7 Burusho AV7

sufficiently severe. Happily winter is short, two or three months at most, and for the rest of the year day and night are spent mainly out of doors.

The social culture of the Burusho of Hunza is as high as their material culture is primitive. Three centuries of Islam—they are now Ismaili heretics, having been Shiahs until three or four generations ago—have not induced them to veil or despise their indomitable women, nor to abandon the wholesome tradition of exogamy between their different clans in favour of first-cousin marriage. They are freer from superstition and fanaticism than any people east or west of whom I have heard or read. Whatever be the esoteric teaching of the Ismailis of which Professor Ivanov might tell, it concerns the Hunza peasant as little as the homoousian controversy disturbs the mind of the British schoolboy. He goes his way in cheerful confidence that hard work, fair dealing, kindly affection and generosity must be as well pleasing to God the Merciful, the Compassionate, as ritual prayer or ceremonial fast, and his dreams are not broken by over-anxious fear of Hell or hope of Heaven.

The fastidiousness and personal cleanliness of the Hunza peasant are remarkable. Close packed amongst the crowd at festivals or sitting on the threshing floor amongst the workers, or entertained in their hospitable houses, we were never distressed by human exhalations or molested by parasites. The drinking water is guarded with scrupulous care from pollution by man or beast. Men and women cooperate without embarrassment or restraint and no work is taboo for either sex, though for obvious reasons the heavier jobs of wall-building, irrigation and ploughing fall more naturally to the man, and the care of infants to the woman. But as soon as the father is allowed to handle his child, he will carry the baby proudly and tenderly out for its first airings, while boys and girls alike play with and watch over the toddlers.

Again and again, in face of the high morality and unquenchable spirit of the Hunzukuts, we were ashamed to think of what in our vaunted civilization 'man has made of man'.

2: Lorimer T-3 (1923-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

bonfires recklessly consuming grass-cuttings and leaves that would be worth gold in Nímo's home.

Burushaski is an amazingly rich language, but it has evolved no word for "litter-lout." Go where you will in lane or courtyard, over field or bare hillside, you will not see an eggshell or a fleck of wool or a nutshell lying about. Hunza must be, bar none, the cleanest and the tidiest spot on earth. If a child is lucky enough to be given a few apricot stones he will crack them on a rock, eat the kernels with gusto, and gather up the shells for mother's fire. Only in a couple of the narrow lanes of the deserted fort did we stumble on a cast-away rag or two. When a homespun cloak has served father for three years' hard work, it will descend to a son, or be handed on to an orphan relation; when it is torn and tattered past repair it is carefully plucked to pieces, washed, beaten, and re-spun to make a girl's cloak, for her work is less strenuous than the boy's, and the re-spun cloak is stout enough for her and quite as warm.

Whatever the theoretical tenets of the Maulai (Ismaili) dissenters may be—and of these Professor Ivanow can best speak—the simple Hunzukuts has evolved for himself quite the most practical and admirable modification of Islam that I have ever seen or heard of. He does not veil his womenfolk nor banish them to separate quarters, but treats them as equal partners in field and home. His standard of morals is so high that when a young husband goes abroad, he trusts his young wife to the care of his father and brothers without misgiving. We heard no case of such a trust being abused. He retains his own custom of exogamic marriage between the clans and the normal first-cousin marriage of Islam (though recognized as religiously allowable and occasionally practised by the upper families) savours to the ordinary peasant of incest, and is in fact avoided, though not in principle taboo; he also, as we have noted, preserves his own fastidious and wholesome ideas about sanitation, and keeps his running water scrupulously pure. No archbishops or bishops (whom he would term *pirs*), and no professional priests or *mullas* reside in his territories, for which no doubt he has to thank some tacit concordat between his wise ruler and His Highness the Agha Khan, the spiritual head of the Ismailis.

2; Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

Chapter 22

MARRIAGE IN HUNZA

THE Burusho population of Hunza is divided into four major clans, centred in Báltít, and several minor clans scattered over other villages. Aliábád, being a "new settlement," contained amongst its two hundred houses representatives of almost all the clans. Marriage outside the race is rare, but (as I have already said) exogamous marriage between the clans is the rule.

On the whole the Burusho cling to their settlements along the eight or nine-mile stretch of river below Áltít (two or three miles up-river of Báltít), at a height of 6,000 to 8,000 feet above sea-level. They are not eager to colonize higher-lying districts, for they say their womenfolk refuse to live where the apricot will not ripen. If this is so the women show sound sense, for the dried apricot is one of their staple foods and almost their only source of sugar. The favourite winter breakfast is a hot porridge of these *batéring*. It thus happens that the higher river-stretches above Báltít are mainly settled (if at all) by Wakhi immigrants from Afghanistan. These are a quiet, peaceable folk, markedly less intelligent than the Burusho, loyal subjects of the Mir, well content with their good pasturages and crops of barley and not missing the wheat and the apricot to which they are unaccustomed. A few Burusho colonies are scattered among the Wakhi ones, but, though friendly relations exist, the two learn little of each other's language; and intermarriage, though it would not be taboo, is very rare.

Similarly a couple of the lower Hunza villages are inhabited by Shins, of the same stock as the Gilgit people, but again intermarriage is the exception. We had fully expected to

find much more of it, and David had hoped to get some interesting notes on the bi-lingualism of children whose parents were of different stocks, but we came across no household among the Burusho we met where the wife was a foreigner.

Social intercourse with Nagir is virtually non-existent. The Hunza menfolk occasionally cross the river to barter Hunza wool for Nagir grain, for the former is much valued, though why, with far more extensive pasturage, the Nagir sheep should yield inferior wool was a mystery we never solved. But though a common language might appear to unite the two people, a difference of religion sunders them, and profoundly different social customs. Centuries of rivalry have left strong, latent feelings of hostility and distrust, probably reinforced—though this is a point on which possibly neither side has consciously reflected—by a difference of race. The Nagir women enjoy no such freedom and equality as the Hunza women do. They still wear unbecoming, dark homespun bonnets concealing all their hair while in Aliábád only one such bonnet had survived the comparatively recent coming of the merry cotton cap. Nagir sheep are predominantly dark brown, and in consequence Nagir caps and *chogas* are of a sombre hue that fittingly symbolizes the less genial temperament. Their Shi'ah mosques are called "Houses of Mourning" (*ma'tim sera*), and their interpretation of Islam seems to be as cheerless as would be a form of Christianity that concentrated all its devotion on the sorrows of Good Friday, and spared no thought for the rejoicings of Easter and Christmas. Now it happens that the Arabic word for mourning (*ma'tim*) sounds very similar to the Burushaski *matum* (black). As we rode through Nagir and noted the dour looks of the Nagirkuts, the crouching, face-averted women, the absence of spontaneous "good days" which brighten every Hunza chance encounter, the fact that when a Nagir prince was riding with us his passage was unmarked by any welcome or salute, our Hunza men would murmur with a grim satisfaction: "Their caps are black, and their cloaks are black, and their mosques are black, and by Allah their hearts are black!" All travellers who have passed through the two adjacent states have noted the relative gloom of Nagir, and some

2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

have attributed it to the north-facing mountains which though richer in grass and timber are sorely stinted of the sun.

Whatever the difference is—racial, temperamental, religious, political, or climatic—it is too deep-seated to favour intermarriage. Only the royal houses, sprung from a common ancester—Alexander or another—frequently exchange princesses across the water.

Within Hunza the clans are all reckoned of equal status, but the clan of the Diramiting enjoys a considerable measure of prestige, and at communal ceremonies a Diramiting sets the pace or leads the dance. The story of their origin is interesting. There was once a clan of Tapkients who grew so bold and arrogant that their offences cried to heaven. They were reported to put bread to ignoble uses, they were known to address their mothers by the term *zizi*, which is the exclusive privilege of royal or saiyyid families, and they were haughty and stiff-necked towards their Mir. In vain the eldest royal son implored his father to "do something about it," and when the Mir refused to take suitable measures, the young prince impatiently laid his own schemes. A great gathering of all the clans was to be held on a nameless space of open desert where Aliábád now stands, and the Tapkients attended in full force. The prince plied them with strong *'araq*, and when they had well drunk fell upon them with his retainers and slew every man, boy, and male infant. He did not know that one of the Tapkients had allowed his wife to return to her own people for the birth of her first child. The posthumous infant was called Diram, and from him are sprung the Diramiting of to-day, who carry themselves without arrogance and do not call their mothers *zizi*.

Child marriages do not take place in Hunza, but a girl will rarely pass sixteen or a boy eighteen unwed. The parents seek out a house among some other clan—frequently a house with which marriage relationships already exist—where there is a potential mate of suitable age and standing, and negotiations proceed between the families. In theory the young folk are not consulted; but in practice, where children have romped and played and worked together there is no doubt that per-

nature of their homeland. 000

However, the Mir pointed out to me most clearly and emphatically that intermarriage among members of one tribe is absolutely forbidden. There are four tribes in the Baltit area and they can marry among these four tribes . . . Diramiting, Khorokoch, Borong, Barataling . . . but definitely not among their own tribe. 582● 143 [101]

Lest this sounds like a difficult matter to hold in check, I want to explain that this is easier to control than may be imagined, for the simple reason that all marriages must be sanctioned and performed by the Mir. Therefore he positively knows who is marrying whom. [585]

However, even if this has been the rule for many hundreds of years, the total population of Hunza, even today, stands at something less than 25,000 souls and Lord Curzon in his memoirs states that in 1894, the total population of Hunza was only 6,000. Therefore, among so small a population, it is almost impossible for them to marry very far beyond a family relationship. (In 1934 it was estimated that the population had risen to 15,000.) 161 582 143

Let's put it in another way. If the people of Hunza have remained more or less a pure people for nigh on 1,000 years and the population today is only 25,000, there must have been fairly close intermarriages. Perhaps that would, as I mentioned, account for the similarity of features.

I want to stress, at this point, that I came to Hunza primarily to learn and study (1) about their health and longevity and (2) about their means and methods of agriculture. 121

Let's examine or re-examine a few of the more pertinent details of their unusual country. 000

Hunza is a country that lies along the Hunza River

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza

Here are some interesting quotations from Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan's autobiography 127

"During my thirty-nine years as Mir there have been two murders only in my country and all the people have been happy and prosperous. The Government of India had never interfered with the internal administration of the country and as my people see more of the world they have added cleverness to their previous simplicity. 674 [648]

"There is not enough land for the growing population and so I encourage my people to go out into the world and get work in other places. . . . 167

"There are four clans in Hunza and in each village there are appointed four 'Makaddams' (men of good family who settle any little disputes that may arise.) If they consider a crime is too serious for them to settle they refer it to the Trangfas and they, in turn to the Mir's court which is ever open and from sentence of which there is no appeal. 692

"If it is considered that a death sentence is called for, the people are collected and if any one will speak up for the culprit, his sentence is remitted. Otherwise he is executed in the presence of the people. 695 681

"In the former times if anyone committed adultery, his house could be destroyed, his animals slaughtered and his trees felled without any trouble falling on the offenders and though that custom has fallen into desuetude, it is still considered right for a man to kill his wife's lover if he can catch them 'flagrante delicto'! 684 837

"Marriage is not allowed between near relations and whenever possible, people marry into a clan different from their own. Child marriage is discouraged and tribal customs have been moulded to conform to modern ideas since I became Mir. . . . 582 [177]

"In former years Shimshal was used as a place to 681

when a child is one month old. Due to any one of many circumstances, it can be put off, but it is performed before the child becomes of school age in practically all cases.

The Mir told me a case of a man who came from Murtazabad. He had gone away to Persia when he was just young and eventually returned to Hunza uncircumcised. Then he met a girl, fell in love and wanted to get married. Before the marriage ceremony could be performed, he had to allow himself to be circumcised. This, in a mature male can amount to major surgery and a long period of illness, pain and recovery.

Evidently circumcision has been proved beneficial to mankind because, from the information that I have received, it is now generally practiced throughout the Western world as well. It is unthinkable that any Mohammedan would take unto himself a wife before he had been circumcised. By law a man can marry at 15 and a woman, or should I say girl, when she is 9 years of age. Therefore it is almost compulsory that circumcision be performed before a male is 15.

It is quite common for the parents to arrange for their children's marriages when quite young. That is, the parents betroth the children to each other even from the tender ages of childhood. Nowadays in Hunza the men marry between the ages of 19 and 21 and the girls from the ages of 13 to 15. Actually that isn't too far different from the custom in the West.

All marriages take place at one time of the year in Hunza—usually December 21st—and there must be snow on the ground on the Hunzan wedding day. Where the Mohammedan law runs in opposition to the Hunzan law, the Hunzan law invariably prevails.

Yes, there is divorce in Hunza, but it is very rare.

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7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
Hunza
Nagir

123 smellier than limburger cheese. But so help me, dirt, stink and all, he was a likeable fellow. If only we could have ducked him in the water and got a scrubbing brush and some soap, I probably would have enjoyed his company.

Somewhere near the next village he left us. He was almost in tears at the thought of parting. I had a quarter rupee silver coin in my pocket and gave it to him. He didn't want it but he thanked me at least 200 times for it. I'm sure he would have given me his lousy old shirt if I would have accepted it. As it was, he waved us good-bye with tears in his eyes.

643 628 The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir are on friendly terms, but I don't for a moment imagine that they are bosom companions. Yet the Mir of Hunza's wife, the Rani, is a Nagirwal. Her uncle is the present [582] Mir of Nagir. In fact, through the centuries, while the people of both these states were at loggerheads with each other, the ruling class intermarried and were always on amicable terms . . . and so it continues.

I will quote here again from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E*: "From time to time we have tried to have relations with Nagir that were friendly but they have never lasted, although there have been marriages between the ruling families of both countries. My father and Zafar Khan, Mir of Nagir used occasionally to meet and I remember well the formality of these occasions. Each would come with a large number of followers and would halt on his side of the river. On one occasion Uzar Khan came over to Hunza and there was a great feasting; on another the Mir came and I and some other people from Hunza had to go over to the Nagir bank of the river and remain there as hostages until the Mir returned."

000 The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over

4: Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 AV3 Dard AV3
Burusho AV7

D 302 the top of the head for a space 2 inches broad in front, tapering to half an inch behind. Those who cannot boast of long locks, dress their hair into numerous small cork-screw ringlets all round the head.[1] On the approach of middle age the whole head is shaved, according to the orthodox Mahommedan fashion, and the beard is allowed to grow. In Chitral the effect of the long-flowing locks reaching to the D waist is often extremely picturesque.

576 The mode of salutation between equals, on meeting after a prolonged absence, is graceful and pleasing. After clasping each other, first on one side then on the other, hands are joined, and each person in turn kisses the hand of the other. Superiors are greeted either by kissing the hand or touching the foot, both at meeting and parting. In Chitral, when the meeting is between two of unequal rank, the inferior kisses the hand of the superior, who in return kisses the former on the cheek. A similar practice is said to have existed among the ancient Persians.[2]

D 644 On the occasion of the visit of one chief to another, a rather curious ceremony called "Kobah" takes place. On arrival, B the visitor is conducted to the Shawaran,[3] and the followers of 644 both chiefs show their dexterity in firing at a mark set up on a tall pole, from horseback while galloping at speed. After this a bullock is led out before the guest, who draws his sword and does his best to cut its head off at a single blow, or deputes one of his followers to do so, and the carcase is given to his retinue. The custom exists in Shighnan, Badakhshan, Wakhan, Chitral, Yassin, Gilgit, Hunza, and Nager. In the latter place it is customary to slay the bullock with bow and arrow. Of late years the practice has become somewhat modified owing to the strict observance of Mahommedan customs, and it is more usual to give over the bullock alive to the guest, so that its throat may be cut in a more orthodox fashion; but occasionally a chief wishing to show off the strength of his arm and the temper of his blade, will adhere to the old custom.

B 575 Polygamy is of course practised, and the right of divorce is somewhat wantonly exercised. The marriage of very ● 582 young children is not common, though occasionally practised. 587 Girls are generally married between the ages of ten and four-

D 595 [1] Rawlinson mentions this as an ancient Persian fashion.—*Ancient Monarchies*, Vol. IV.

582 [2] Strabo Book XV., Chapter 3, Section 20.

587 [3] The Shawaran answers all the purposes of the village green in England, being used for all gatherings and games.

B D [267]

Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 AU1 Afghanistan AU2
4 AV3 Dard AV3
Burushó AV7

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[562] teen. Wives are regarded as the absolute property of the husband and his heirs. On a man's death his brother can
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595 claim to marry all his widows, and no widow can marry again
582 without the consent of her husband's brothers. Frequently,
587 if a man leaves several widows as well as several brothers,
D the latter apportion the former among themselves. So strictly
595 is the rule observed that, should there be only one surviving
582 brother and he an infant, the widow cannot remarry elsewhere
587 till he is old enough to say whether he will marry her or not; On the other hand, it is considered disgraceful to refuse to marry a brother's widow, so that it is not uncommon for a boy of ten years old to marry a woman more than twice his age. So absolute is the custom, that a woman cannot refuse to marry her deceased husband's brother, and her own parents have no voice in the matter. This often leads to two sisters being wives to the same man simultaneously, though the practice is forbidden by Mahommedan law. In Chitral, marriage with a husband's brother, though common, is not compulsory on the woman. Among the Afghans of Dir, if a widow should refuse to marry her husband's brother, he has the power of selling her, as she is regarded in the light of family property, which has been purchased and paid for. Among the Shin caste the marriage of first cousins or other relations within that degree (such as uncle and niece) is strictly prohibited, though allowed by Mahommedan law. In Torwal and Bushkar the marriage of first cousins is allowed, but marriages such as of uncle and niece or niece's daughter are forbidden.

B In none of the Dard languages are there terms distinctive
595 of polygamous relationship. All wives are of equal rank,
601 priority of marriage not conferring any claim. In the Shina and Boorishki languages, uncles on the father's side are styled
D "great father" or "little father," according to their age in
595 comparison with that of the speaker's father; but there is a
601 distinct term for an uncle on the mother's side. In the same way the term "aunt" is only applied to those on the father's side, the mother's sisters being all styled "mother." There is no specific term either for nephew and niece, who are styled "son" and "daughter." In the same way cousins are styled "brother" or "sister." This would seem to point to the former existence of communal marriage, such as still exists in some parts of India. In the Khowar language the term "uncle" is applied to the brothers of both father and mother without distinction; but aunts on the mother's side are styled "mother,"

4: Biddulph G-3 (1873-1878) 1880 AV3 Dard AV3
Burusho AV7

B 585 D 585

In Gor, rings are exchanged at marriage. In the ruling families of Hunza and Nager, it is the custom, when a daughter is married, for the bridegroom to present her at betrothal with a gold and silver needle. In Yassin, when, as not unfrequently happens, the bridegroom is too poor to pay the required price, the young couple elope, with the consent of the bride's parents. At the end of ten days the bridegroom comes to them and asks forgiveness, promising to pay the required sum by degrees. A little scene is acted, forgiveness is granted, the neighbours are summoned to the feast which has been already prepared, and the wedding is celebrated. This is to save the credit of the bride's family in not having received a sufficient price for her.

DB 582 DB 851 DB 842

The old marriage barriers between the castes are beginning to be broken down under the levelling influence of Mahommedanism, and in a few generations will probably disappear altogether. The birth of a son is always a matter of general rejoicing. The friends of the happy father at once make it an excuse to stop work for the day, and seizing their matchlocks keep up a general *feu-de-joie* till their powder flasks are empty. The village band is summoned, and dancing kept up round the door for the rest of the day. No notice is taken of the birth of daughters. In the Oxus Valley and in Sirikol, when a son is born, all the father's friends hang their weapons on the walls of his house, so as to accustom the infant to martial sights. After seven days the weapons are returned to the owners, except those belonging to near relations, who receive special presents in exchange.

D 846

After the birth of a child a woman is esteemed unclean, and no one will eat from her hand for seven days. North of the Hindoo Koosh this period is extended to forty days, and for the first seven the infant is not allowed to suckle its mother.

D 764

I have elsewhere discussed the old custom of disposing of the dead by burning. Now the common form of Mussulman interment is used. A small flat slab of earth about two feet long is neatly plastered over the graves, and a light is kept burning at night by newly-made graves, under the pretence of keeping away wild beasts till the earth has hardened; but, as Mr. Drew has remarked, this is more probably a relic of the old practice of cremation. No attention or care is paid to old graves, which constantly present a most unpleasant appearance, owing to the falling-in of the arched roof. I remarked in Sirikol the same want of attention to old graves